

Rebbetzin's Corner¹

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“Don’t dress your whale in galoshes, if she really prefers overshoes,” says Billy De Wolfe on *Free to Be You and Me*, an album I happen to listen to more times a day than pious Jews pray. And so I’ve been thinking about clothing, and what it means to dress Jewishly. As we approach the summer solstice, just as we shed our *chametz* for spring, we shed our clothes for summer. So it is time to talk *tzniut*, which means “modesty,” but really is about appropriate dress generally.

When I was in high school, I was on the swim team every winter. On the starting block, ready to race, I wanted all eyes on me, like any athlete. After the meet, I would walk up into the stands to greet my friends or family—and with each step, become ever more uncomfortable being surrounded by people in parkas while I wore a Speedo that would have made a Frenchman blush. When it comes to style, context matters.

Which is why wearing yoga pants to synagogue is more appropriate than wearing jeans. In the sanctuary upstairs, we try to sanctify Shabbat by dressing a little nicer than we do during the week, maybe even try on a clean shirt. But this summer in the social hall there will be the latest in our series of meditative, restful, and inspiring “ShabbAsana” sessions. Stay tuned for the date, and remember, jeans just wouldn’t work.

Similarly, as you walk from house to house for the Tikkun Leil Shavuot, your dress shoes won’t allow you to fully appreciate the flower farm, or its proximity to the rabbi’s house. So wear comfortable shoes, and come hungry...I’ll be wearing an apron.

¹ Forgive my absence, dear reader, from last month’s Rebbetzin’s Corner. Despite my diligence as a scholar, I lost an appendix at Henry Ford, and my painkillers interfered with my writing.